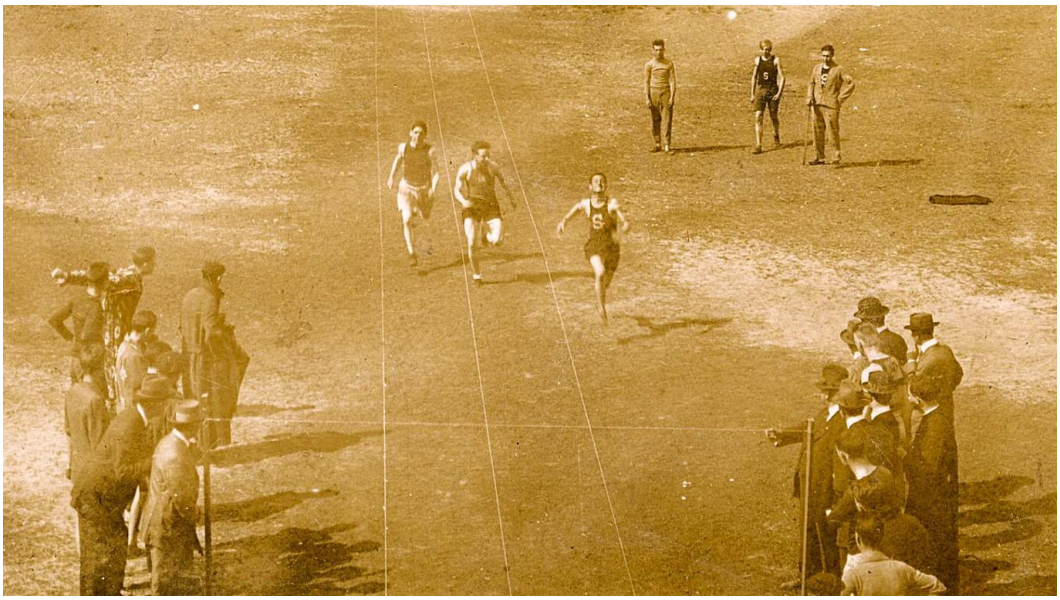
Retro #14: BEGINNING OF A RICH LEGACY IN TRACK

In 1916, Forster Commagere, the first full-time coach at St. Stanislaus, under the auspices of the College Athletic Association and the Southern Association Amateur Athletic invited high schools and colleges along the Gulf Coast to participate in track meets hosted at St. Stanislaus. Before his arrival at the school the previously year, SSC had competed against other schools only in baseball and basketball. He introduced track and according to the newspaper *"defeated with ease every school in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama."* He had a knack of the getting others involved in athletics with pep rallies and parades, and his championship teams brought excitement to Bay St. Louis. Local people showed great enthusiasm, served as officials at meets, and supported his efforts. The St. Stanislaus Athletic Association was created in 1916.

Professional photographers and newspaper reporters happily attended and recorded the events at SSC. Photographs of the events were printed onto postcards and sent to friends and family. Several such postcards from the Cooper Postcard Collection on the Mississippi Department of Archives and History website show runners in a meet at SSC in 1916.



The note on this postcard reads, *"This is the College yard in one of the track meets 1916. The boy that is in the lead is Luis Ros."* Another postcard, almost identical but taken fractions of a second later, reads "*Finish Second Heat 100 yard dash won by Luis A Ros, S.S.C."*

The notation on this postcard reads, *"Finish First heat 100 yd. dash won by Cyril Claverie S.S.C."* It is interesting to see the meet officials in hat and coat and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in their cassocks cheering on the runners.

Southern Prep School Track Champions, 1916-17

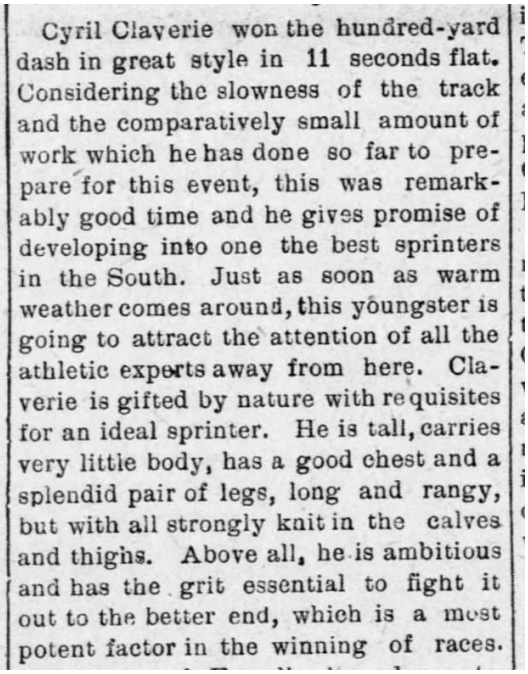
Coach Forster Commagere, Cyril Claverie (captain), Nathan Tycer, Richard Gannon, Graham Moore, Edward Curtis, Frank Lopez, Alwin Ansley, Robert Stulb, Arno Steinweg, Sidney Brown, Joseph Constantine, William Stack, Walter Powers, Edward Reed, Oliver Dabezies, Nichlas Lala, Paul Maestri, Gordon Reddy, Fritz Schutt, Richard Martinez, Milton Phillips, and Joseph Hymel

The first of many championship teams at SSC coached by Forster Commagere.

The Sea Coast Echo sent reporters to the events and published their articles. Below are excerpts from articles of March 18, 1916, and May 6, 1916.

LOCAL TRACK TEAM DEFEATS N.O. SUBURB-AN BY BIG SCORE.

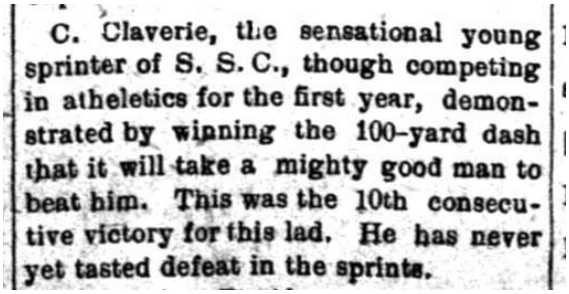
Second Track Meet of the Season Results in Overwhelming Victory for St. Stanislaus Teams -- Score 119 to 24.



Cyril Claverie won the hundred-yard dash in great style in 11 seconds flat. Considering the slowness of the track and the comparatively small amount of work which he has done so far to prepare for this event, this was remarkably good time and he gives promise of developing into one the best sprinters in the South. Just as soon as warm weather comes around, this youngster is going to attract the attention of all the athletic experts away from here. Claverie is gifted by nature with requisites for an ideal sprinter. He is tall, carries very little body, has a good chest and a splendid pair of legs, long and rangy, but with all strongly knit in the calves and thighs. Above all, he is ambitious and has the grit essential to fight it out to the better end, which is a most potent factor in the winning of races.

ST. STANISLAUS DEFEATS THE LA SALLE TEAM FROM N. O.

In Track Meets Events On Sunday Last By a Score 91 to 43—Biggest Crowd Ever Assembled Witnessed the Best Meet of Season—Tycer a Star of the Day.



C. Claverie, the sensational young sprinter of S. S. C., though competing in atheletics for the first year, demonstrated by winning the 100-yard dash that it will take a mighty good man to beat him. This was the 10th consecutive victory for this lad. He has never yet tasted defeat in the sprints.

Brother Xavier Werneth, April 2025